

Coping with Cancer in Everyday Life

Cancer and treatment side effects may affect your daily life. Learn to cope with day-to-day issues and concerns that occur when you have cancer.

TRY THIS

Get in touch with your feelings. Recognize the range of emotions you could be feeling.

Know when to seek help. Talk to a doctor if your feelings overwhelm or concern you.

Practice mindfulness. Learn how to relax your body and mind. Slow down and breathe.

CHECK THIS OUT

Visit the Springboard page on Coping with Cancer in Everyday Life. <https://smokefree.gov/springboard/stress-mood/coping-with-cancer>

Learn new ways of talking to your loved ones (<http://goo.gl/dcl0ir>) and to your health care team (<http://goo.gl/mzbqHh>).

Get coping skills from the coping checklist. <http://goo.gl/3crB7t>

<https://smokefree.gov/springboard/>

Distress

People living with cancer feel many different emotions, including distress. Distress is emotional, mental, social, or spiritual suffering. Here's what you can do to help ease this symptom.

TRY THIS

Don't overwhelm yourself. Focus on one thing, one day at a time. Take small steps.

Be physically active. Exercising can improve how well you feel.

Practice self-reflection. When you're feeling stressed, pause to think about the situation.

CHECK THIS OUT

Visit the Springboard page on Distress. <https://smokefree.gov/springboard/stress-mood/distress>

Learn more about distress in people with cancer (<http://goo.gl/SJuXXR>) and adjustment to cancer (<http://go.usa.gov/xaKmd>).

<https://smokefree.gov/springboard/>

Practice Mindfulness and Relaxation

Cancer and its treatment can be stressful—for you and your caregivers. Practicing mindfulness and relaxation can help calm your mind, reduce stress, and sharpen your ability to focus.

TRY THIS

Enjoy simple pleasures. Enjoy your favorite food, or listen to your favorite song.

Take a walk outside. Walk slowly. Notice what you see, hear, and smell.

Practice deep conscious breathing. Sit in a quiet spot for a few minutes. Notice your breath.

CHECK THIS OUT

Visit the Springboard page on Mindfulness and Relaxation. <https://smokefree.gov/springboard/stress-mood/practice-mindfulness>

Learn the health benefits of relaxation. <http://goo.gl/adsTj7>

Get a message of hope for the person who has cancer. <http://goo.gl/kCkAsQ>

Learn helpful relaxation skills. <http://go.usa.gov/xaKy3>

<https://smokefree.gov/springboard/>

Be Active

Exercise is not only safe and possible during cancer treatment, but it can improve how well you function physically and your quality of life.

TRY THIS

Do physical activity. Being physically active for even just a few minutes a day is helpful.

Begin with warm-up exercises. Start slowly and warm up for at least 2 to 3 minutes.

CHECK THIS OUT

Visit the Springboard page Be Active. <https://smokefree.gov/springboard/wellness/be-active>

Watch this video on finding time for exercise when you're busy. <https://goo.gl/NZynYN>

Use the SuperTracker to track your food and physical activity. <http://go.usa.gov/xaKpj>

<https://smokefree.gov/springboard/>

Healthy Eating

Eating well can help you feel and live better during and after treatment. Here are some tips to help you.

TRY THIS

Work with a specialist. Ask a dietitian to help you create a nutritious, balanced eating plan.

Shop smart. Stock your kitchen with healthy foods.

Practice mindful eating. Don't get too hungry before you eat. Stop eating when you're full.

CHECK THIS OUT

Visit the Springboard page Healthy Eating.

<https://smokefree.gov/springboard/wellness/healthy-eating>

Sign up for HealthyYouTXT. <http://go.usa.gov/xaKpV>

Watch these videos on healthy eating, acting, and living.

<https://goo.gl/0lmSHq>

Learn more about nutrition after treatment ends. <http://goo.gl/LBjsmv>

<https://smokefree.gov/springboard/>

Family, Friends, and Caregivers

Learning that you have cancer can be just as scary for family and friends as it is for you. Loved ones might not know what to say. Follow these tips to help you talk about your cancer diagnosis.

TRY THIS

Establish good communication. Decide and set limits on how much you want to share.

Ask for help. Your loved ones want to support you. Be specific about the kinds of help you need.

CHECK THIS OUT

Visit the Springboard page Family, Friends, and Caregivers.

<https://smokefree.gov/springboard/get-support/family-friends-caregivers>

Find a peer group. <http://goo.gl/DBJuVm>

Get tips for telling others about your cancer. <http://goo.gl/HNHtX>

Learn more about talking to children about your cancer. <http://go.usa.gov/xaKfY>

<https://smokefree.gov/springboard/>

Health Care Team

Cancer treatment typically requires a team of health care professionals, including doctors, nurses, and other staff who help take care of you before, during, and after treatment.

TRY THIS

Establish good communication. Take notes and bring someone with you to appointments.

Build a relationship. Let your health care team know what you expect from them.

Be prepared. Write down questions ahead of appointments.

Consider a second opinion. Ask your doctor for a referral and to share your medical records.

CHECK THIS OUT

Visit the Springboard page Health Care Team.

<https://smokefree.gov/springboard/get-support/health-care-team>

Get additional resources to help you. <http://goo.gl/gkj0K3>

Read this fact sheet on communication in cancer care.

<http://go.usa.gov/xaKvD>

<https://smokefree.gov/springboard/>

In the Workplace

Some people with cancer continue to work while they get treatment, and others do not. Learn how to communicate with your employer and co-workers, and understand your rights as an employee.

TRY THIS

Be prepared. Determine who you want to share the information with.

Know your rights. Determine your capabilities during treatment, and keep records of your discussions.

CHECK THIS OUT

Visit the Springboard page In the Workplace.

<https://smokefree.gov/springboard/get-support/in-the-workplace>

Learn more about working during cancer treatment.

<http://goo.gl/zjiAf0>

Read about going back to work. <http://go.usa.gov/xaKGj>

Look into the Patient Advocate Foundation. <http://goo.gl/vSJpPM>

<https://smokefree.gov/springboard/>